

**LWYSA**  
**Training Program**  
**Book 4**  
**Positional Play in Systems**



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**Lake Washington Youth Soccer Association**  
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# **WELCOME TO THE LAKE WASHINGTON YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION FAMILY OF PROGRAMS**

In 1967, a group of individuals got together and formed an Association for our youth, centered around the game of soccer, which has endured and developed the following organizational philosophy.

## **VISION**

To be recognized by our membership and soccer community as a world-class provider of youth soccer services.

## **MISSION**

To promote the game of soccer and to provide opportunities for all youth under the age of nineteen who register with us, to play affiliated soccer at a level commensurate with ability and interest. We will emphasize the development of self-esteem, good sportsmanship, fitness, achievement, teamwork and skill through the playing of the game; and provide educational opportunities to further develop all players, coaches, referees and administrators.

The Vision and Mission statements above are our creed. Following in this thought, the Association takes great pride in its approach of teaching life's lessons to our youth. This environment is intended to create an enjoyable soccer experience as well as develop young athletes.

Many individuals have contributed to the success of the Association Programs over the years. To all those individuals, the Association is truly grateful for the contributions and sacrifices they made in behalf of our youth.

## Table of Contents

<b>The Fundamentals of Positional Play in a Specific System</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The South American 4-3-3 System.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The South American 4-3-3 System.....</b>	<b>11</b>
The Keepers Role .....	11
Defense.....	11
Offense .....	11
<b>The South American 4-3-3 System.....</b>	<b>12</b>
The Center Backs Role .....	12
Defense.....	12
Offense .....	12
<b>The South American 4-3-3 System.....</b>	<b>13</b>
The Outside Backs Role.....	13
Defense.....	13
Offense .....	13
<b>The South American 4-3-3 System.....</b>	<b>14</b>
The Deep Midfielders Role .....	14
Defense.....	14
Offense .....	14
The Center Midfielders Role.....	15
Defense.....	15
Offense .....	15
<b>The South American 4-3-3 System.....</b>	<b>16</b>
The Attacking Midfielders Role .....	16
Defense.....	16
Offense .....	16
<b>The South American 4-3-3 System.....</b>	<b>17</b>
The Center Forwards Role .....	17
Defense.....	17
Offense .....	17
<b>The World at Large 3-5-2 System of Play .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>The 3-5-2 System.....</b>	<b>19</b>
The Keepers Role .....	19
Defense.....	19

Offense .....	19
<b>The 3-5-2 System.....</b>	<b>20</b>
The Triple Backs Role .....	20
Defense.....	20
Offense .....	20
<b>The 3-5-2 System.....</b>	<b>21</b>
The Wide Midfielders Role .....	21
Defense.....	21
Offense .....	21
<b>The 3-5-2 System.....</b>	<b>22</b>
The Center Midfielders Role .....	22
Defense.....	22
Offense .....	22
<b>The 3-5-2 System.....</b>	<b>23</b>
The Defending or Attacking Midfielders Roles .....	23
Defending Midfielders Role.....	23
Defense.....	23
Attack .....	23
<b>The 3-5-2 System.....</b>	<b>24</b>
Defending or Attacking Midfielders Role.....	24
Attacking Midfielders Role.....	24
Defense.....	24
Attack.....	24
<b>The 3-5-2 System.....</b>	<b>25</b>
The Center Forwards Role .....	25
Defense.....	25
Attack.....	25
<b>The 4-4-2 System of Play .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>The 4-4-2 System .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>The Keepers Role</i> .....	27
Defense.....	27
Offense .....	27
<b>The 4-4-2 System.....</b>	<b>28</b>
The Central Defenders Role .....	28
Defense.....	28
Offense .....	28

<b>The 4-4-2 System.....</b>	<b>29</b>
The Outside Backs Role.....	29
Defense.....	29
Offense.....	29
<b>The 4-4-2 System.....</b>	<b>30</b>
The Central Midfielders Role.....	30
Defense.....	30
Offense.....	30
<b>The 4-4-2 System.....</b>	<b>31</b>
The Wide Midfielders Role.....	31
Defense.....	31
Offense.....	31
<b>The 4-4-2 system .....</b>	<b>32</b>
The Center Forwards Role .....	32
Defense.....	32
Offense.....	32
<b>The Sweeper and Marker 3-5-2 System of Play .....</b>	<b>33</b>
The Sweeper System .....	32
The Keepers Role .....	34
Defense.....	34
Offense.....	34
The Sweepers Role .....	35
Defense.....	35
Offense.....	35
<b>The Sweeper System .....</b>	<b>36</b>
The Center Backs Role .....	36
Defense.....	36
Offence.....	36
<b>The Sweeper System .....</b>	<b>37</b>
The Outside Backs Role.....	37
Defense.....	37
Offense.....	37
<b>The Sweeper System .....</b>	<b>38</b>
The Deep Midfielders Role .....	38
Defense.....	38
Offense.....	38

<b>The Sweeper System .....</b>	<b>39</b>
The Attacking Midfielders Role .....	39
Defense .....	39
Offense .....	39
<b>The Sweeper System .....</b>	<b>40</b>
The Center Forwards Role .....	40
Defense .....	40
Offense .....	40
<b>The French 4-3-3 System of Play .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>The French 4-3-3 System .....</b>	<b>42</b>
The Keepers Role .....	42
Defense .....	42
Offense .....	42
<b>The French 4-3-3 System .....</b>	<b>43</b>
The Center Backs Role .....	43
Defense .....	43
Offense .....	43
<b>The French 4-3-3 System .....</b>	<b>44</b>
The Outside Backs Role .....	44
Defense .....	44
Offense .....	44
<b>The French 4-3-3 System .....</b>	<b>45</b>
The Deep Midfielders Role .....	45
Defense .....	45
Offense .....	45
<b>The French 4-3-3 System .....</b>	<b>46</b>
The Central Midfielders Role .....	46
Defense .....	46
Offense .....	46
<b>The French 4-3-3 System .....</b>	<b>47</b>
The Wingers Role .....	47
Defense .....	47
Offense .....	47
<b>The French 4-3-3 System .....</b>	<b>48</b>
The Center Forwards Role .....	48
Defense .....	48

Offense .....	48
<b>The Husky Women 4-1-3-2 System.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>The 4-1-3-2 System.....</b>	<b>50</b>
The Keepers Role .....	50
Defense.....	50
Offense .....	50
<b>The 4-1-3-2 System.....</b>	<b>51</b>
The Center Backs Role .....	51
Defense.....	51
Offense .....	51
The Outside Backs Role.....	52
Defense.....	52
Offense .....	52
The Defensive Midfield Player's Role .....	53
Defense.....	53
Offense .....	53
<b>The 4-1-3-2 System.....</b>	<b>54</b>
The Attacking Midfield Players Role .....	54
Defense.....	54
Offense .....	54
<b>The 4-1-3-2 System.....</b>	<b>55</b>
The Center Forwards Role .....	55
Defense.....	55
Offense .....	55

# The Fundamentals of Positional Play in a Specific System

The idea for writing this booklet arose from the numerous occasions in my coaching career when I have needed to fit a system of play around the particular strengths of the players that I've been coaching.

My experience with Everton FC as their reserve team coach was invaluable, as has my experience of working with Dean Wurzberger the head coach of the University of Washington Soccer Team.

Deans UW men's team have been extremely successful since his arrival and that is due in no small part to his meticulous attention to detail especially in the area of performance expectations from his players.

Dean has been especially helpful in helping to create a simple but effective way to pass the necessary information of the coaches' expectations onto the players.

It was as we were preparing the positional requirements for yet another successful UW system that I thought that the information we were presenting to the players should be made available to every player playing in a specific system.

Players need to know what the coach expects of them and this booklet will provide the player and the coach with that information.

When I was a player I was never content with just knowing what was expected of me and my positional play, I also wanted to know what was expected of the other players and this booklet will give players that information also.

To make a system effective each player is expected to fill a role and to do the job in such a manner that the whole team will benefit from the performance.

To be effective the system must provide a team balance that will cater for the strengths of each player and in effect use each player's strength to cover another's weakness.

Therefore players need to know exactly what the coach expects from them when they are assigned their specific positions.

Players cannot be expected to discover the dos and don'ts of each role through their playing experiences, they need to be informed of their role expectations and that of their teammates before the start of each game.

The reinforcement of that role information to the players before each game acts as a reminder to each player that they are of special importance to the team and that a solid performance by them linked to similar performances by their teammates will go a long way to ensure a victory for the team.

Each position is of particular importance in the two basic areas of team play known as **defense** and **attack**.

Each player has a specific role to play in both of these areas and I will explain these roles.

However there are also four areas of performance that need to be addressed by the coaches so that the players know what is expected of them in each of these areas as far as **priority** within each job description.

I'm talking about each player's role in the areas of;

**Winning the ball---Keeping the ball---Making chances---Scoring goals**



These areas will be marked “**Very important**”, “**Important**” or “**Not important**” to show what the coach expects from the player playing that position.

“**Very important**”; this means that the task is extremely important to that position.

“**Important**”; this means that the task is important but not the main task for that position.

“**Not important**”; this means that the task carries some importance but is not essential to the playing of that position.

Lets take the goalkeeper as an example; the keeper would be expected to **win the ball** through making saves and collecting crosses.

The keeper would also be expected to **keep the ball** by distributing it to teammates using different throwing or kicking techniques to do so.

Both of these areas would be marked “**Very important**”.

The keeper would not be expected to either **make chances** or **score goals** for the team so they would be marked “**Not important**”.

Anything marked “**Important**” would mean that the task was an expected part of the job but wasn’t the most important part.

Also the players that are referred to in each diagram will be shown as a block letter **A**

While the goalkeepers will always be shown as a block letter



## The South American 4-3-3 System

I first saw this system of play when I was witness to the Argentina National teams performance in the 1978 World Cup Finals.

The tournament was played in Argentina and as you can imagine a tremendous amount of pressure was put on the Argentinean players to win the World Cup on their home ground.

This they did, even beating the Dutch National team who brought their “Clockwork Orange” style of play to Argentina.

I must admit that I was a big fan of the Dutch style of play and was cheering for them in the final game, which matched them against the Argentina National team.

However the Argentinean team showed the World that their style and system of play was as good as and on this day better than the Dutch system by winning 3-1 in over time after the game had ended tied 1-1.

I can remember thinking that the style and system of play that the Argentineans preferred was very different from the one we played in the English leagues but it was very effective and involved lots of skillful play from each individual player.

I particularly liked the role of the deep third attacker or attacking midfielder who could support the two center forwards or break into penetration space in front of them and in this World Cup Final the Argentinean attacking midfielder had scored two goals.

Years later I witnessed the same system being played in England when an Argentinean International player named Ossie Ardeles became manager of Swindon Town, a team I had once played for.

Swindon Town started to become successful especially in the area of scoring goals and their attacking midfielder played an especially important part in that success by scoring lots of goals.

I took the time to study the Swindon style of play and found that the change from a flat four in the midfield to a diamond shape gave the midfield a numerical advantage in the central area of the field.

This meant that the diamond shaped midfield provided the team with an extra defender when defending and an extra attacker when attacking especially if, as in most cases, that attacker was not marked.

In recent years teams of the caliber of the Brazilian National team have used this system and have utilized the full backs as attacking threats with their surging runs up field.

At the same time these full backs are also expected to take care of the defensive part of their wing role and this double duty calls for a special kind of athlete with pace, power, stamina and great technical ability.

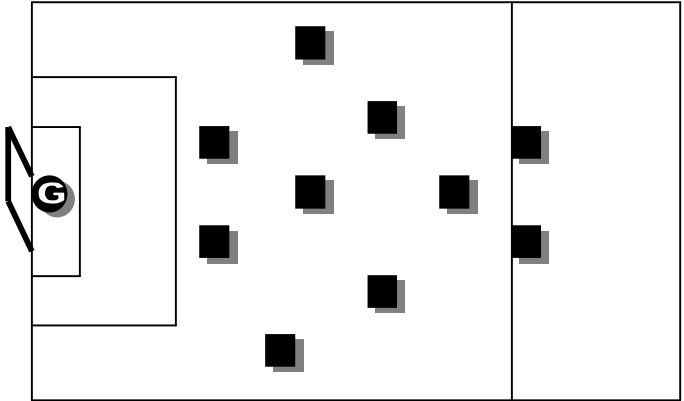
As the reserve team coach at Everton FC, I was required to match a system of play to the strengths of my players.

The skill level of my team changed according to how many players from the first team squad were allowed to join the regular reserve team players.

If no first team players were made available to play I joined the reserve team players with the youth team players so you can imagine the varying degrees of quality players that I had to work a system around.

My teams were most successful when I played them in the South American 4-3-3 system and I believed that they all enjoyed the extra freedom of expression that this system provides for the players.

# The South American 4-3-3 System



## *The Keepers Role*

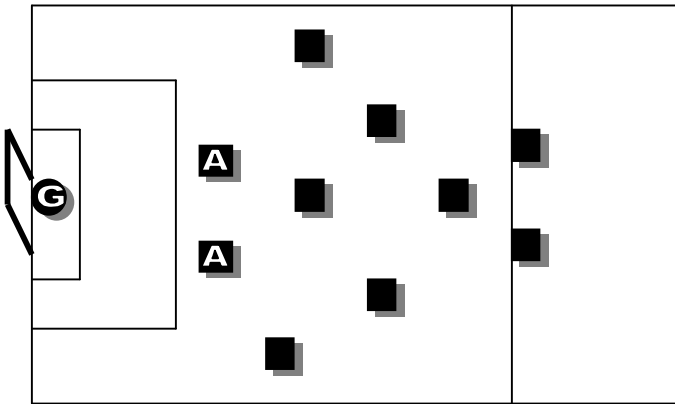
### **Defense**

- Organize, direct and “sweep” behind the back line.
- “Safe hands” are needed to collect crosses and make the saves that should be made.
- Stand tall and make a “big shape” when preparing to save shots.
- Make quick and authoritative decisions when faced with “goal dangerous” situations.

### **Offense**

- Distribute the ball quickly and accurately to teammates in the back, midfield or frontline.
- Distribute the ball by using over arm, side pitch or under arm throws or by using volley, half volley or place kicks as required.
  
- **Win the ball**                    **Very important**
- **Keep the ball**                    **Very important**
- **Make chances**                    **Not important**
- **Score goals**                    **Not important**

# The South American 4-3-3 System



## *The Center Backs Role*

### Defense

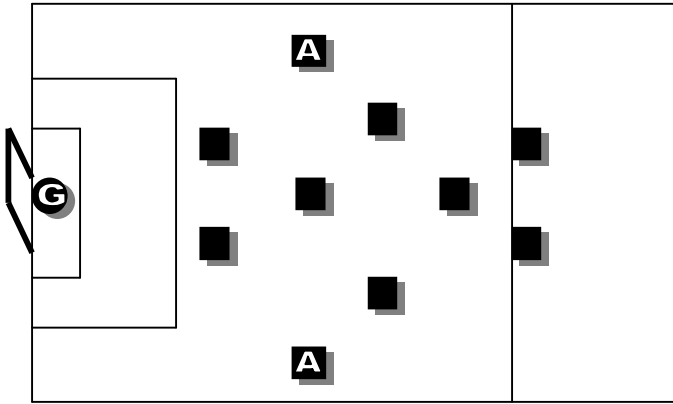
- Dominate the opposing forwards both in the air and on the ground.
- Take charge of organizing the fullbacks by directing their positioning.
- Work in tandem with each other so that when one center back is challenging for the ball the other is dropping off slightly to provide cover in case the challenge is lost.
- Recognize that together you represent the “off-side” line and can move this line back and forwards in unison according to the demands of the situation.

### Offense

- Begin the teams attacking moves with accurate passes to forwards midfielders or fullbacks as the situation demands.
- Carry the ball forward out of defense only if the other center back and the deep lying midfielder sit in to cover, otherwise don't.
- Provide a scoring threat on attacking dead ball situations using your height, power and challenging experience to out-dual the opponents.

- **Win the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Keep the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Make chances**                      **Not important**
- **Score goals**                      **Important**

# The South American 4-3-3 System



## *The Outside Backs Role*

### **Defense**

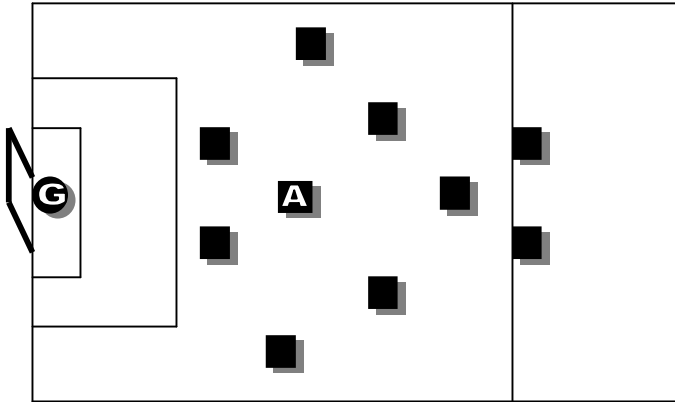
- Pick up and mark any free attacking player in your designated area of defense when the opponents attacking play is being directed down your side of the field.
- Adopt a covering position when the play is directed down the opposite side of the field.

### **Offense**

- Provide accurate passing deliveries to the front players both in the wide and central channel.
- Place forward passes either directly into the forwards or beyond them and the opponents' back line forcing both the forwards and the defenders to turn and engage in a foot race to establish ball possession.
- Provide attacking support in the wide areas during the midfield build-up and be prepared to overlap into forward positions when the opportunity presents itself.
- Play and think like a "winger" once inside the attacking third of the field.

- **Win the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Keep the ball**                    **Very important**
- **Make chances**                    **Important**
- **Score goals**                      **Not important**

# The South American 4-3-3 System



## *The Deep Midfielders Role*

### **Defense**

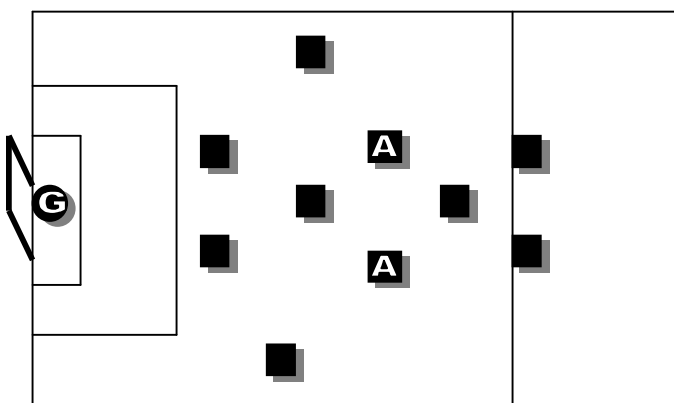
- Sweep in front of the two center backs.
- Be first to challenge or pick up and mark any unmarked player coming through the central midfield area with or without the ball.
- Assist the center backs by picking up and marking any forward who “comes off” the front line and into the midfield area to look for the ball.

### **Offense**

- Find space in deep midfield to be available for passes from the back line players.
- Support play in the midfield to offer an intermediate option to take part in a play switching opportunity.
- Support the attack from a deep lying position so as to latch onto any half hit clearances from the opposing defenders and by passing to an attacking teammate keep the pressure on the defending team.
- Be prepared to shoot at the opponents’ goal from thirty yards out or closer.

- **Win the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Keep the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Make chances**                      **Important**
- **Score goals**                      **Not important**

## The South American 4-3-3 System



### *The Center Midfielders Role*

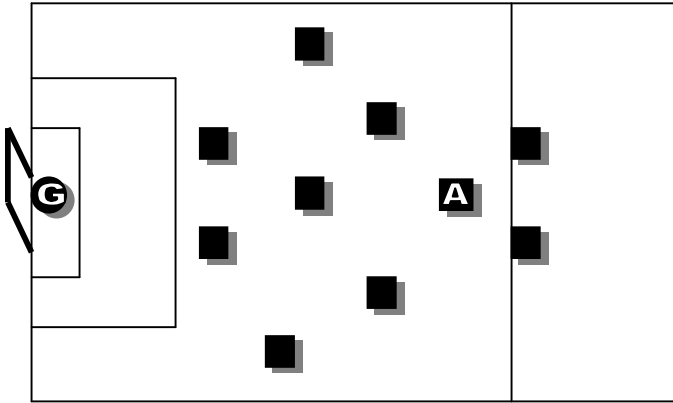
#### **Defense**

- Pick up opposing midfield players and be prepared to win all challenges in the midfield.
- Leave the central midfield area to put pressure on any opposing full back moving forward with the ball.
- Assist with defensive cover as needed in central midfield.

#### **Offense**

- Link passes with fellow midfield players to establish ball control dominance over the opposing midfield players.
- Provide an accurate passing service to frontal strikers or any other teammates making forward runs into the attacking zone.
- Provide support to forwards receiving the ball with their back to goal so as to give them an immediate passing outlet.
- Make penetrating runs with and without the ball down the wing areas and through the central attacking areas.
- Join in the attack by supplying crosses into the opposition penalty area and shots at the opponents' goal.
- **Win the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Keep the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Make chances**                      **Very important**
- **Score goals**                      **Important**

# The South American 4-3-3 System



## *The Attacking Midfielders Role*

### **Defense**

- Drop back to make positional contact with the two central midfield players allowing either of these players to leave the mid field area to apply pressure on any attacking full back.
- Assist the strikers to put pressure on the opponents' back line when they have the ball especially when the tactics have changed from low to high pressure.
- Assist with the marking and tracking back of overlapping full backs when positioned in the wide areas of the field.

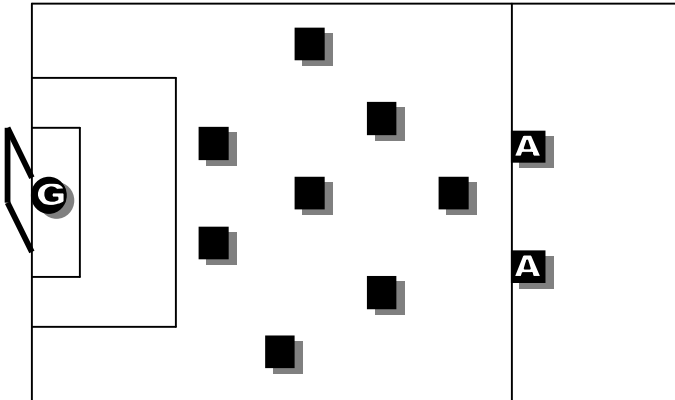
### **Offense**

- Supports the movements of the two front strikers by taking up “pass back” or “touch on” supporting positions when either of the strikers receives the ball.
- Initiate passing opportunities by making penetration runs beyond the positioning of the strikers in order to receive a penetration pass or to free up a striker to receive the ball by attracting the attention of a marker.
- Create chances for teammates and yourself to score goals by recognizing the opportunities that central and wing attacking situations provide.
- Understand the time that ball possession in the attacking zone provides for the attacking players to create penetration space through coordinated movement.

- **Win the ball**                      **Important**
- **Keep the ball**                      **Important**
- **Make chances**                      **Very important**
- **Score goals**                      **Very important**



# The South American 4-3-3 System



## *The Center Forwards Role*

### Defense

- Delay the opponents' attempts to play quickly out from the back by applying pressure to the central back line players.
- Continue to mark your opposing center back especially when the ball is in the midfield area to stop any easy pass backs to them.
- Come back to assist the defenders in "dead ball" situations.

### Offense

- Post up and keep possession of the ball when played into feet.
- Make penetrating forward runs with and without the ball.
- Get into position to receive the ball while our team is defending in the defensive half of the field.
- Create goal-scoring chances.
- Score goals.
- Be mobile in the penalty area whenever an opportunity to cross the ball is imminent. [Remember that your movement will be difficult to mark and if the ball is crossed into the space you attack you will be in the best position to get it.]
- Form a game plan around the strengths and weaknesses of yourself, your attacking teammates and your opponents to gain an attacking advantage.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Very important</b> |

## The World at Large 3-5-2 System of Play

This system of play became very popular in different parts of the World round about the same time mainly because it was such an easy adjustment from other popular systems like the 4-4-2, the 4-3-3 South American system and the Sweeper system.

The 3-5-2 system calls for the use of three center backs whose main job is to stay solid at the back and take care of the defensive part of the job.

It also spreads five midfield players across the field creating a numerical advantage in that area against almost any other system of play.

Along with that it keeps the attacking pair of two central forwards together while supporting them with more midfield attackers.

The five midfield players support the back line on defense and the front line on attack giving the team eight outfield defenders and seven outfield attackers.

Also, the positioning within the system is well spelled out for the players and involves less interchanging of positions than most other systems making it easier for players to learn their specified roles.

Many teams around the World have adopted this system of play because of the simplicity of the players' roles which makes it easier for coaches to select players with specific skills to fit into specific positions.

I first saw this system being played by a Dutch league team that played against Everton in the European Cup Winners Cup.

The Dutch players kept possession of the ball for long periods of time using the balanced positional formation to move the ball around and although they did not score a goal that evening they disrupted the Everton teams game plan by denying them possession of the ball.

In recent years some countries, noticeably Spain have seen their teams adopt this kind of patient ball control game using the 3-5-2 system to great effect.

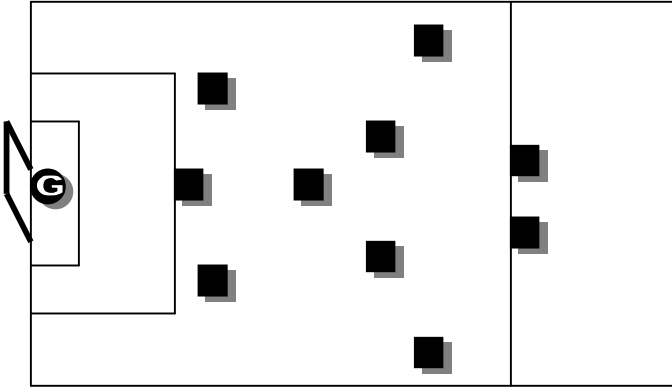
The system allowed the Spanish teams to be especially effective at switching the point of attack from one wing to the other and by doing so creating one v one opportunities and the resulting penetrating possibilities for their fast and skillful wide attackers.

My only problem with this system is that it appears to have most success when linked with patient possession play and I can't believe that the American player will want to adopt the patient style of play needed to make this system effective.

However, perhaps the American players can take advantage of the positional balance that this system brings to the team shape while still injecting their natural fast and aggressive style of play into the game plan.

It's certainly worth a try, but I would warn the coach that if the system of play chosen for the team does not coordinate with the players preferred style of play then it must be replaced with one that does.

# The 3-5-2 System



## *The Keepers Role*

### Defense

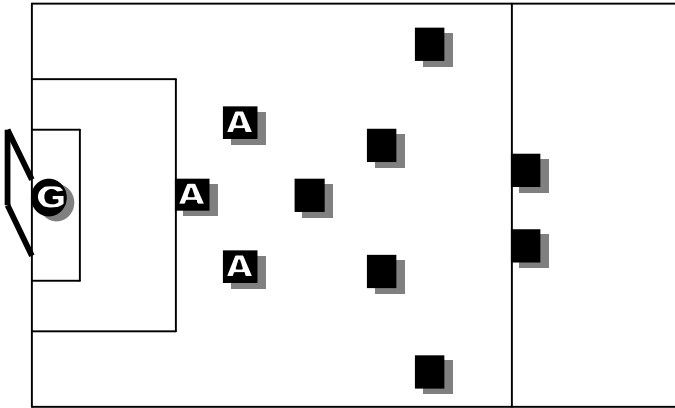
- Organize, direct and “sweep” behind the back line.
- “Safe hands” are needed to collect crosses and make the saves that should be made.
- Stand tall and make a “big shape” when preparing to save shots.
- Make quick and authoritative decisions when in “goal dangerous” situations.

### Offense

- Distribute the ball quickly and accurately to teammates in the back, midfield or frontline as needed.
- Distribute the ball using over arm, side pitch or under arm throws or by using volley half volley or place kicks as required.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Not important</b>  |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Not important</b>  |

# The 3-5-2 System



## *The Triple Backs Role*

### **Defense**

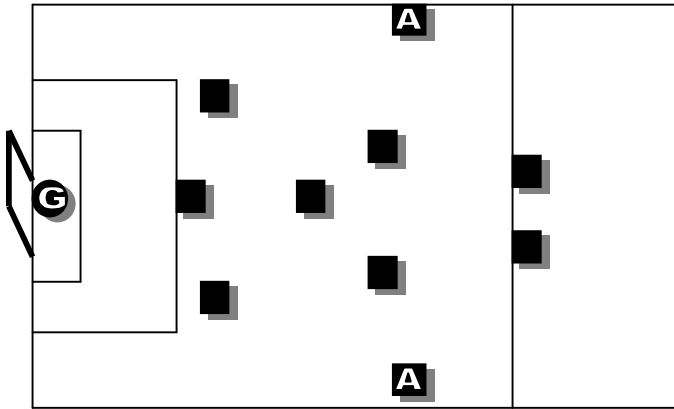
- Defend your designated area by dominating the opposing forwards in that area both in the air and on the ground.
- Work in tandem with each other by recognizing the need to “drop back” or “slide over” in support of the center back employed in challenging for the ball.
- Recognize that you represent the offside line to your opponents and that you will be required to move forward or back in tandem according to the situation.
- Continue to supply defensive cover even though your team is attacking deep in the opponents’ territory to avoid being vulnerable to any quick counter-attack.
- Provide direction to your midfield teammates to enable them to position themselves in the appropriate defensive shape.

### **Offense**

- Begin attacking moves with accurate passes to forwards or midfielders as the situation demands.
- When one of the backs carries the ball out of defense the other two should move centrally and hold a midfielder back to support their defensive position.
- Provide a scoring threat on attacking dead ball situations using your height, power and challenging experience to out-duel your opponents.

- **Win the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Keep the ball**                    **Very important**
- **Make chances**                    **Not important**
- **Score goals**                      **Important**

## The 3-5-2 System



### *The Wide Midfielders Role*

#### Defense

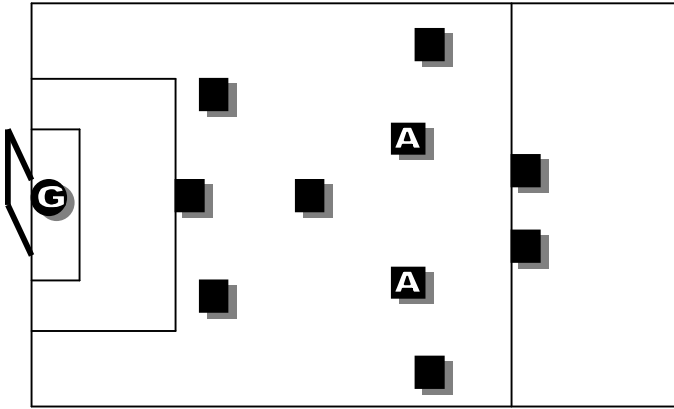
- Challenge the nearest ball-carrying opponent in that area.
- Support a teammate who is challenging an opposing ball carrier in that area.
- Mark an immediate opponent in your wing area who is in position to receive a pass from an attacking teammate.
- Take up a defense balancing position on your wing side of the field when the opposing team is attacking down the opposite wing.

#### Offense

- Penetrate beyond the last opposing defender on your wing by running onto a through pass from a teammate or by dribbling past the opposing defender.
- Provide a threat to the opponents' goal through technical excellence displayed in crossing, shooting and heading the ball.
- Give the attacking team shape and width by holding the wing position as the team advances towards the opponents' goal.
- Leave the wing area to become an extra forward threat when the team has advanced far enough down the opposite wing to cross into the penalty area.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Not important</b>  |

# The 3-5-2 System



## *The Center Midfielders Role*

### Defense

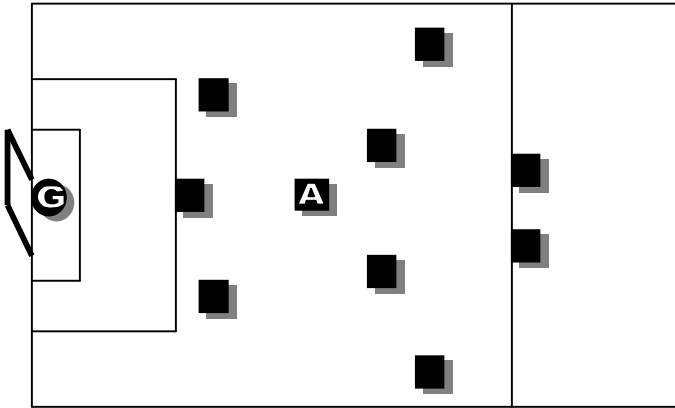
- Pick up and mark the immediate midfield opponent.
- Win challenges against opponents on the ground and in the air.
- Be first to any knockdowns or loose balls.
- Track the opponent when that opponent tries to make a penetrating or unbalancing run through or outside the last line of defense.

### Offense

- Settle the ball with two or three short safe passes that will also allow the forwards to find some attacking space.
- Supply accurate, properly weighted and timed through passes and target passes.
- Make forward support runs both short of and beyond the forwards in order to free them from tight defensive marking or to give them a passing outlet.
- Take shots on the opponents' goal from long and medium range.
- Break forward into wide areas in order to cross the ball into the penalty area.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Important</b>      |

# The 3-5-2 System



## The Defending or Attacking Midfielders Roles

### *Defending Midfielders Role*

#### **Defense**

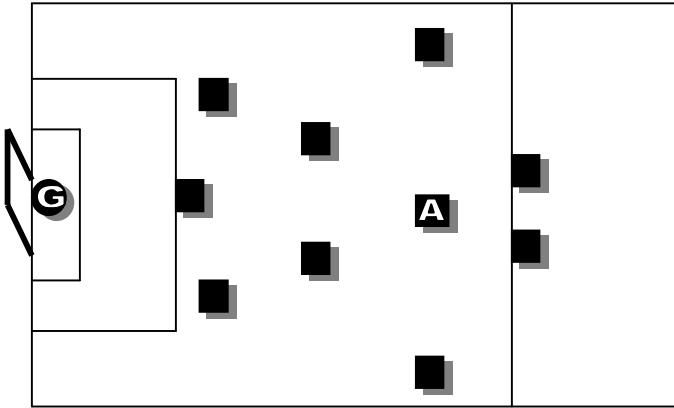
- Intercept any target passes aimed at the opposing strikers.
- Challenge for any high goalkeeper clearances allowing the center backs to drop and sweep.
- Challenge and tackle any opponent dribbling the ball at the heart of the defense.
- Support either midfield teammate challenging for the ball.

#### **Attack**

- Settle the ball with short safe passes.
- Switch play with long diagonal passes from one side of the field to the other.
- Penetrate the opponents' defense with perfectly weighted through passes.
- Strike long-range shots.

- **Win the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Keep the ball**                    **Very important**
- **Make chances**                    **Important**
- **Score goals**                      **Not important**

# The 3-5-2 System



## ***Defending or Attacking Midfielders Role***

### ***Attacking Midfielders Role***

#### **Defense**

- Support the strikers as they press the defenders for the ball.
- Drop into the midfield to become an extra defender.
- Follow any special tactics or game plan adopted for that game.

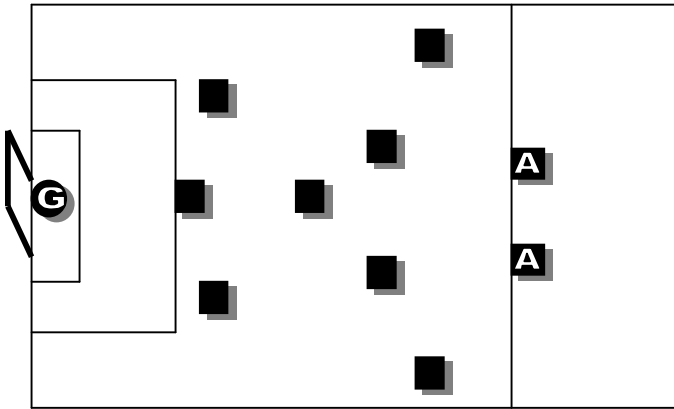
#### **Attack**

- Support the two front forwards immediately they receive a pass.
- Supply the front players with “give and go” and “through” passes.
- Make penetrating runs beyond the front forwards.
- Exploit available wing space to provide crosses for the front forwards.
- Make chances and score goals.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Very important</b> |



# The 3-5-2 System



## *The Center Forwards Role*

### **Defense**

- Delay the opponents' attempts to play quickly out from the back by applying pressure to the central back line players.
- Stay with your mark so that there are no easy pass backs available to release opposing midfielders from defensive pressure.
- Come back to assist on any opposing "dead ball" situations.

### **Attack**

- Work for space in central attacking areas.
- Position yourself to receive a target pass.
- Make a run off the defender's shoulder to receive a diagonal through pass.
- Run along the defensive line before breaking beyond it to receive a straight through pass.
- Link up with teammates to play give and go passes.
- Make runs to either the near post, far post or middle of the penalty area to connect on crosses.
- Make chances for attacking teammates.
- Score goals.

- **Win the ball**                      **Important**
- **Keep the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Make chances**                      **Important**
- **Score goals**                      **Very important**

# The 4-4-2 System of Play

This system of play was derived from the 4-2-4 system that was commonly used in the English Premier League in the mid 1960's.

When I played for Everton FC in the 1966 FA Cup Final we used the 4-2-4 system to beat Sheffield Wednesday 3-2.

As a central midfielder I was pleased when our manager changed the system to a 4-3-3 the following year because the two midfield players in the 4-2-4 were overworked.

Yet the system had provided a positional balance that promoted exciting attacking play with two forwards and two wingers combining on every attack.

Then some coach came up with idea of playing four midfielders by withdrawing the wing players into deeper starting roles.

Of course this also changed the wide players job description as they were now expected to assist their full backs in their defensive duties.

Also, the full backs were now expected to assist the wide players in their attacking duties by providing overlapping support when the opportunity presented itself.

The 4-4-2 changed the player type required to take up the wide position from an out and out attacker to an attacking player who could also play defense.

What I like about the 4-4-2 is the team balance it provides on offense and defense calling for eight outfield defenders and six or seven outfield attackers.

I also like it because it pairs players into partnerships;

**Right full back-----Two center backs-----Left full back**

**Right midfielder---Two center midfielders---Left midfielder**

**Two center forwards**

Each of these pairings must combine together to form a working partnership that relies on the players' abilities to dovetail their skills to provide a solid defensive front and/or an explosive attacking front.

Obviously, the two center backs are not expected to surge forward onto the attack nor are the two center forwards required to keep dropping back onto defense although the coach will require each of them to fulfill a role in any attacking or defending dead-ball situation.

The great thing about the 4-4-2 is that everybody has a job to do and a partner to help do it, which is normally the recipe for success on the soccer field.

In the late 80's and early 90's an Italian coach from AC Milan changed his teams tactics from the customary Sweeper system used in Italy to a 4-4-2 system.

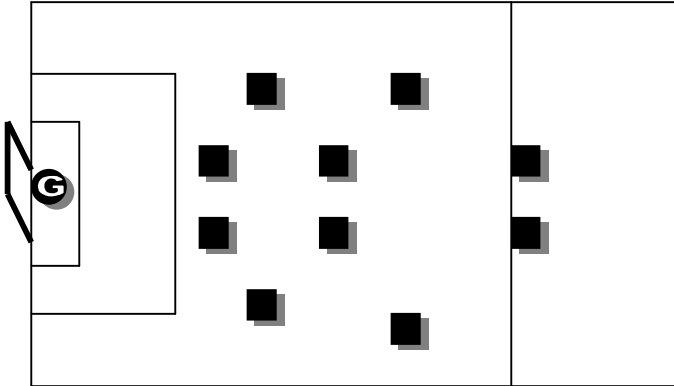
The results were astounding as the new system pressured the other teams into early mistakes that the Milan players were quick to capitalize on.

The 4-4-2 system combined with a pressure style of defense assisted by a back four that used the offside trap to great effect raised the tempo of the AC Milan play and changed the face of Italian soccer.

The 4-4-2 system is at this time one of the most favored styles of play in the top soccer nations of Europe.

If it's good enough for them then it's good enough for us, good luck.

# The 4-4-2 System



## *The Keepers Role*

### **Defense**

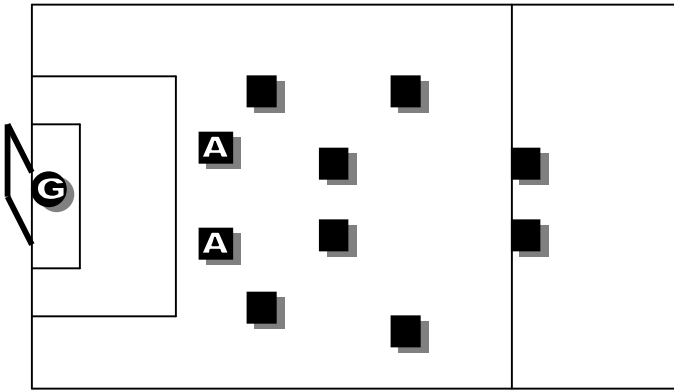
- Organize, direct and “sweep” behind the back line.
- “Safe hands” are needed to collect crosses and to make the saves that should be made.
- Stand tall and make a “big shape” when preparing to save shots.
- Make quick and authoritative decisions when in “goal dangerous” situations.

### **Offense**

- Distribute the ball quickly and accurately to teammates in the back, midfield or front line as needed.
- Distribute the ball by using over arm, side pitch or under arm throws or by using volley, half volley or place kicks as required.

- **Win the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Keep the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Make chances**                      **Not important**
- **Score goals**                      **Not important**

# The 4-4-2 System



## *The Central Defenders Role*

### **Defense**

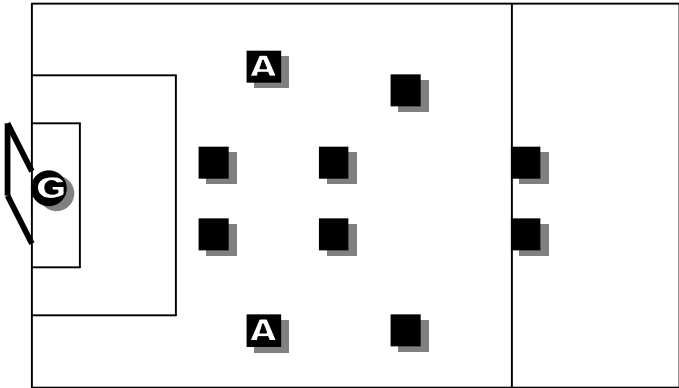
- Dominate opposing forwards both in the air and on the ground.
- Organize the fullbacks by directing their positioning.
- Work in tandem with your fellow center back by dropping deep to provide cover for the ball challenging teammate.
- Recognize that you represent the “off-side” line so that you can move the line back and forwards in unison according to the demands of the situation.

### **Offense**

- Start the offensive moves with accurate passes to forwards, midfielders or fullbacks as the situation demands.
- Only carry the ball out of defense and into the midfield or forward areas when you are certain that the open position you leave can be covered by a deep lying midfielder plus the second center back, otherwise don't go.
- Provide a scoring threat on attacking dead ball situations using your height, power and challenging experience to out-dual your opponents.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Not important</b>  |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Important</b>      |

# The 4-4-2 System



## *The Outside Backs Role*

### **Defense**

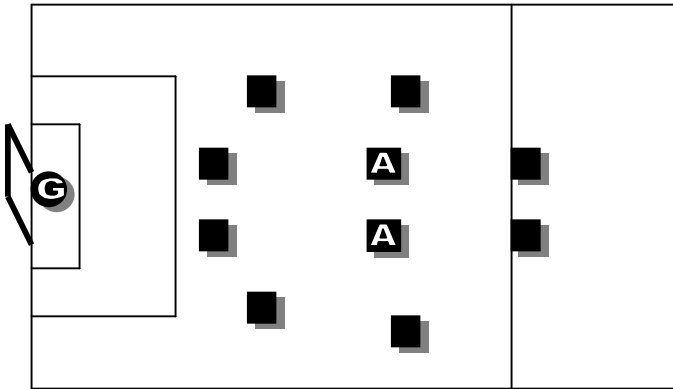
- Pick up and mark any free attacking player in your area of defense when the opponents' attack is being directed down your side of the field.
- Adopt a covering position when the opponents' attack is directed down the opposite side of the field.

### **Offense**

- Provide accurate passes to front players both in the wide channel and central channel.
- Provide attacking support in the wide areas during the midfield build-up and be prepared to overlap into forward positions when the opportunity presents itself.
- Play and think like a "winger" once inside the attacking third of the field.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Not important</b>  |

## The 4-4-2 System



### *The Central Midfielders Role*

#### **Defense**

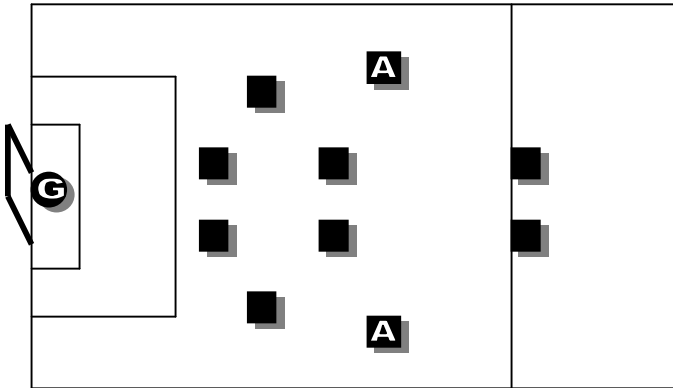
- Pick up opposing midfield players and be prepared to win all challenges in the midfield.
- Assist with defensive cover as needed in central and wide midfield.

#### **Offense**

- Establish ball control dominance over the opposing midfield players by linking passes with your fellow midfielder players.
- Provide an accurate passing service to frontal strikers or any other teammates making forward runs into the attacking zone.
- Provide support to forwards receiving the ball with their back to the goal so as to give them an immediate passing outlet.
- Make penetrating runs with and without the ball down the wing areas and through the central attacking areas.
- Join in the attack by supplying crosses into the opposition penalty area and shots at the opponents' goal.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Important</b>      |

# The 4-4-2 System



## *The Wide Midfielders Role*

### **Defense**

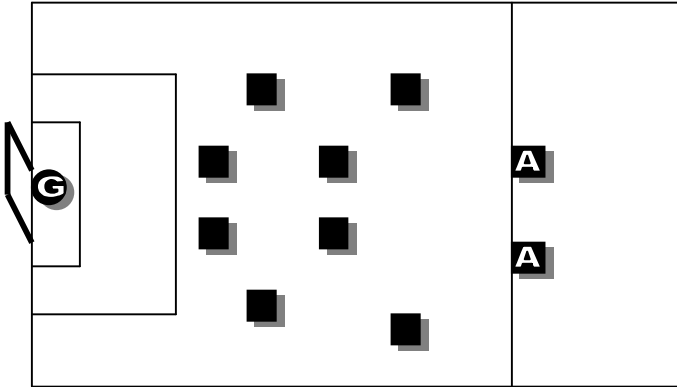
- Be the first defender on your side of the field when the opposition attack initiates down that side.
- Mark up and stay with the opposing fullback if that player attempts to execute an overlapping run down that side.
- Assist your fullback to defend against any particularly talented dribbling opponent.
- Provide team balance by tucking in on your side when play is being directed down the other side.

### **Offense**

- Provide attacking width by staying close to the touchline when your team is attacking.
- Initiate penetration down your wing area by making forward runs with and without the ball designed to get you into the space behind the opposing defense.
- Supply a steady stream of crosses from your wing area into the penalty area.
- Use your dribbling ability to cut into the penalty area for a shot on goal.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Important</b>      |

## The 4-4-2 system



### *The Center Forwards Role*

#### **Defense**

- Delay the opponents' attempts to play quickly out from the back by applying pressure to the central back line players.
- Stay marking the center back so that you don't allow easy pass backs to central defenders allowing opposing midfielders to escape from pressure situations.
- Come back to assist in any opposing "dead ball" situations.

#### **Offense**

- Work for space to receive the ball in central attacking areas.
- Post up and keep possession of the ball when played into feet. (Refrain from flicking balls on first touch unless by doing so you create a penetration opportunity for a teammate).
- Make penetrating central runs with and without the ball.
- Get into position to receive the ball when your teammates are defending deep in their defending half of the field.
- Create goal-scoring chances.
- Score goals.
- Formulate a game plan around the strength and weaknesses of yourself, your attacking teammates and your opponents in order to gain attacking advantages.

- **Win the ball**                      **Important**
- **Keep the ball**                    **Very important**
- **Make chances**                    **Important**
- **Score goals**                      **Very important**



## The Sweeper and Marker 3-5-2 System of Play

In the early years of soccer playing many of the emerging soccer countries attempted to copy the systems of play used by the traditional soccer nations primarily England and Scotland.

Both of these countries claimed to have invented the game and both laid claim to being the most tactically aware as far as systems of play were concerned and for a while they were probably right as their W/M formation of play made mincemeat of teams from the rest of the World.

However some of the emerging nations were not impressed with the W/M formation and preferred instead to anchor their defense with a sweeper and some markers.

It was argued that the match up of the W/M formation provided little cover for a beaten defender whereas the Sweeper system did.

That is the great strength of the Sweeper system; it provides a safety net for the marker who is beaten on a one-v-one challenge.

Also, as the job of the sweeper is to provide cover for the challenging player that player can mark the opponent much tighter than would be possible if there were no covering sweeper.

The combination of these factors makes life so much more difficult for the opposing attackers because even if they were to beat the first defender the covering sweeper would immediately confront them while the defender that had just been beaten recovers into a sweeping position.

It has been my experience that asking young players to combine successfully as a defensive back four takes a long time to perfect.

Why not wait until the complexities involved in back four play can be absorbed more quickly by the players and in the mean time play with the defensive comfort zone of having a sweeper.

The sweeper will collect any over-hit forward passes that might otherwise become dangerous penetration passes and will always be on hand to cover a defending player challenging for the ball.

I think that the Sweeper system of play is a good way to go especially if the team that you oppose has some forward match ups that could prove difficult for your defenders. Of course the Sweeper system is not all about defending advantages, as the tight marking defenders will be able to intercept passes in front of their mark and break forward with the ball to set up the attack.

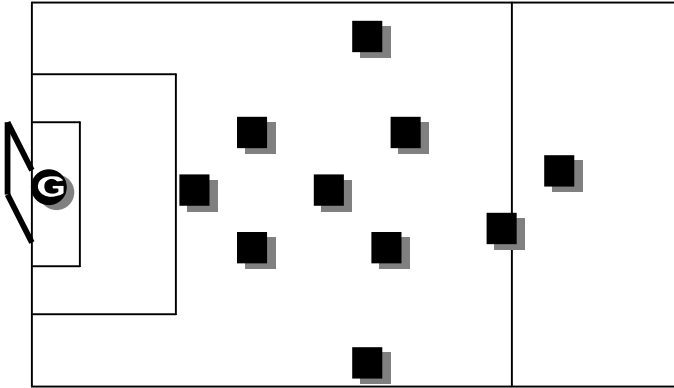
This would not be possible without the presence of the sweeper as any attacking burst by a marking defender would leave an unmarked forward ready to capitalize on any quick forward pass should the defender lose possession of the ball.

The coach's job is to place the players in a system of play that makes goal scoring difficult for the opponents without restricting the attacking possibilities for the team and the Sweeper system of play does that.

So, when confronted by some awesome opponent don't pack your defense with so many players that you can never mount any meaningful attack.

Instead, mark up on their dangerous players and cover them with a sweeper and you'll find that your attacking and defending play will stay in balance.

# The Sweeper System



## *The Keepers Role*

### Defense

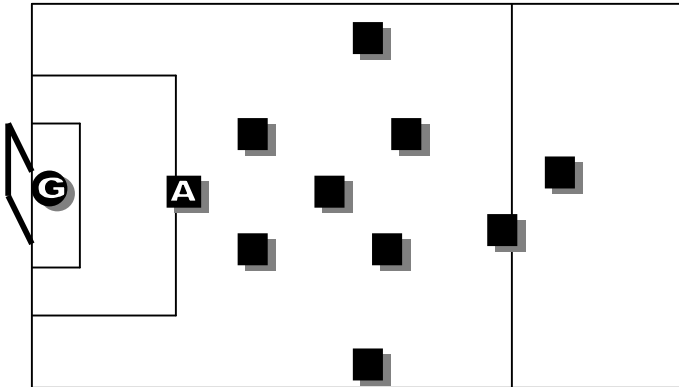
- Organize, direct and “sweep” behind the back line.
- “Safe hands” are needed to collect the crosses and make the saves that should be made.
- Stand tall and make a “big shape” when preparing to save shots.
- Make quick authoritative decisions in “goal dangerous” situations.

### Offense

- Make quick and accurate distributions of the ball to teammates in the back, midfield or frontline as needed.
- Distribute the ball by using over arm, side pitch or under arm throws or by using volley, half volley or place kicks as required.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Not important</b>  |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Not important</b>  |

# The Sweeper System



## *The Sweepers Role*

### **Defense**

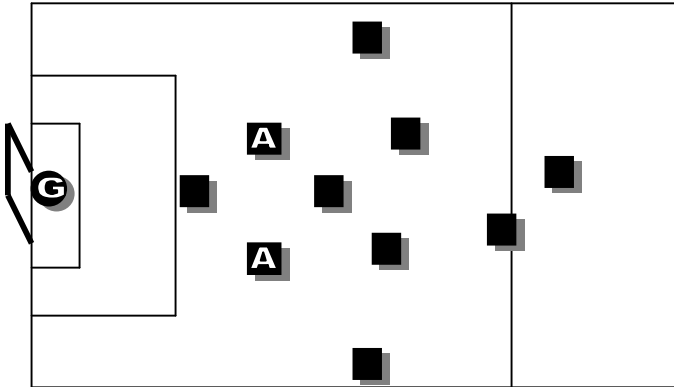
- Position yourself behind the marking defenders in order to protect the penetration space located behind those defenders and in front of the goalkeeper.
- Know when the opposing attack has advanced far enough that the sweeping position can be assumed by the goalkeeper allowing you to take up a marking position in the back line.

### **Offense**

- The sweepers job when in possession of the ball depends on certain circumstances.
- Time and space to control and pass the ball allows the initial attacking movement to begin with the sweepers pass.
- When under pressure from the opposing forwards a safety-first type of clearance is the play to make.
- Don't get involved in any fancy dribbling moves out of the back field unless circumstances force that type of play to be made.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Not important</b>  |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Not important</b>  |

# The Sweeper System



## *The Center Backs Role*

### **Defense**

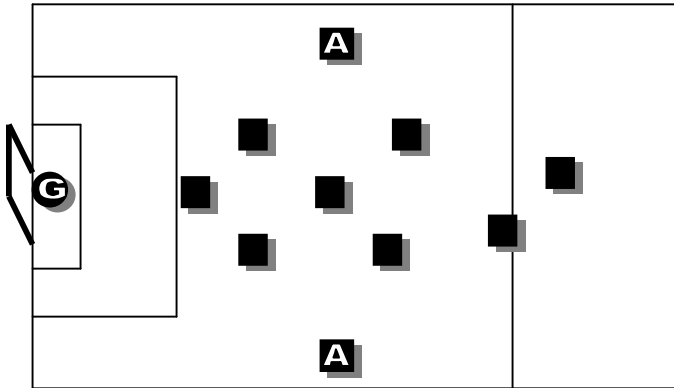
- Dominate the opponents forwards both in the air and on the ground with powerful challenges.
- Recognize that the positioning of the sweeper allows the opportunity to mark the forward tighter so that the chances to intercept the ball in front of the forward are enhanced.
- Provide a powerful presence when defending all dead ball situations because of previous experiences in “strong challenge” situations.

### **Offence**

- Frontal interceptions will allow you to break forward with the ball in order to initiate an attacking play because the sweeper can cover the vacated position.
- Provide a scoring threat on attacking dead ball situations using your height, power and challenging experience to out-duel your opponents.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Not important</b>  |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Important</b>      |

# The Sweeper System



## *The Outside Backs Role*

### Defense

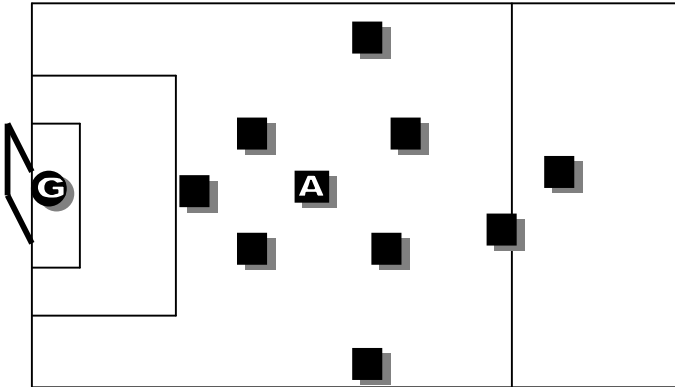
- Pick up and mark any free attacking player in your area of defense when the opponents' point of attack is being directed down your defensive side of the field.
- Adopt a covering position when play is directed down the opposite side of the field.

### Offense

- Make accurate deliveries of the ball to the front players both in the wide channel [ball dropped in over opponents full back] and central channel [passes targeted to central players].
- Support the attack in the wide areas during the midfield build-up and be prepared to overlap into forward positions when the opportunity presents itself.
- Play and think like a "winger" once inside the attacking third of the field.

- **Win the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Keep the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Make chances**                      **Important**
- **Score goals**                      **Not important**

# The Sweeper System



## *The Deep Midfielders Role*

### **Defense**

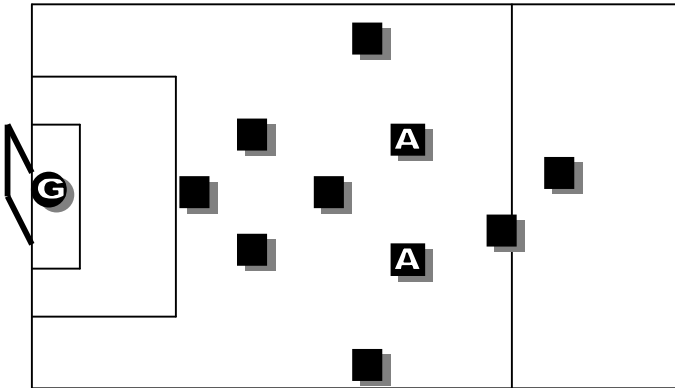
- Sweep in front of the two center backs.
- Pick up and mark a central midfield opponent when a midfield teammate goes wide to challenge the opposing full back.

### **Offense**

- Find space in deep midfield to be available for passes from back line players.
- Support play in the midfield to offer an intermediate option to take part in a play switching opportunity.
- Support the attack from a deep lying position so as to latch onto any half hit clearances from the opposing defenders and by passing to an attacking teammate keep the pressure on the defending team.
- Be prepared to shoot at the opponents' goal from thirty yards or closer.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Not important</b>  |

# The Sweeper System



## *The Attacking Midfielders Role*

### Defense

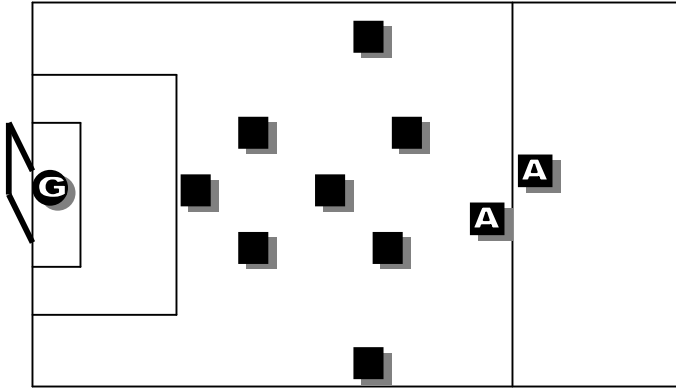
- Pick up and mark opposing central midfield players and be prepared to win all challenges in the midfield.
- Be prepared to leave your midfield mark to confront the opposing full back should that opposing full back start to carry the ball forward towards the halfway line on your side of the field.
- Attempt to keep the ball and your mark in view at all times.

### Offense

- Support the front strikers by taking up supporting positions to assist them.
- Be prepared to make penetration runs in behind the strikers in order to receive a pass or to free up a striker to receive a pass by attracting the attention of the marker.
- Create chances for teammates and score goals by recognizing and understanding the opportunities that ball possession in the attacking zone provides for the attacking team.
- Recognize the opponents' strengths and weaknesses so that you can form a game plan to match your own and your teammates' strengths against those weaknesses.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Very important</b> |

# The Sweeper System



## *The Center Forwards Role*

### **Defense**

- Delay the opponents' attempts to play quickly out from the back by applying pressure to the central back line players.
- When the ball has been passed beyond your area stay close to the center backs so that they cannot be used as easy pass backs by the opposing midfielders.
- Come back to assist in any opposing dead ball situations.

### **Offense**

- Get control of any ball played directly to your feet.
- Stay central as much as possible and be available as a central target whether collecting the ball in front of or behind the opponents' back line.
- Make penetrating runs with and without the ball.
- Get into position to receive the ball while your team is defending in their defensive half of the field.
- Create opportunities to score goals yourself.
- Play your strengths against your opponents' weaknesses.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Very important</b> |



## The French 4-3-3 System of Play

The French 4-3-3 system of play has allowed them to win the two most recent tournaments that they have entered namely the World Cup and the European Nations Cup.

Obviously the quality of the French players had something to do with the victories but the team did play a different system than the other competing Nations and it worked.

The French system ensures that the wings are well supported with a full back and an attacking winger on each wing.

They play a lone forward supported by two attacking midfielders and this gives them a balanced attack with five attackers strategically positioned to support the attacker on the ball.

The outside fullbacks are given license to support their wingers especially when overlapping situations present themselves.

The deep-lying center midfielder holds his position in front of the two center backs and this allows one of the fullbacks to go forward onto the attack without leaving any holes in the defense.

The system is pretty solid all round but the thing that makes it all work is the speed and skill of the French players.

All systems of play need a certain amount of talent to make them work so lets take a look at the ideal players to fill the positions in this formation.

As the team are playing four at the back the keeper must be sharp and alert at all times so that any penetration passes behind the back line can be collected or swept clear by the keeper.

The two center backs need to have height, power and pace to enable them to mark their opponents effectively.

The two wing backs need energy, pace and power to attack and defend effectively.

The deep center midfielder needs power to win the ball and good passing techniques to keep changing the point of attack with long passes.

The two inside forwards need quick feet, explosive bursts of energy to surge past defenders and good passing and finishing skills.

The wingers need great pace to make penetrating runs and tight ball dribbling skills to make penetrating dribbles beyond their full back opponents.

They also need to cross the ball accurately and shoot with accuracy and power.

The center forward needs power and pace good first touch control and accurate shooting and heading talents.

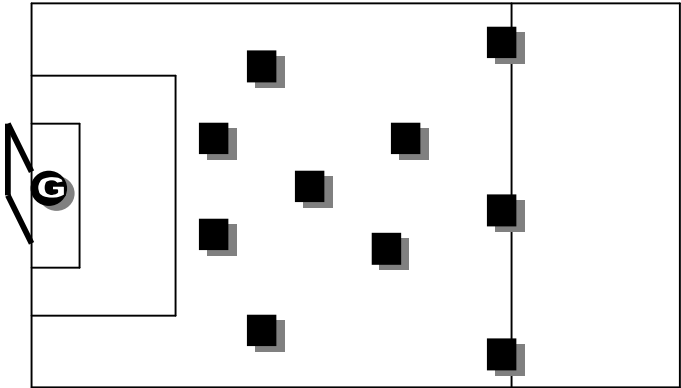
The center forward especially needs to keep control of the ball when receiving it and must present a goal scoring threat at all times.

The French players filled these roles especially well and that is why they were successful.

Many of the other countries would have liked to have copied the French system of play but they did not have the players with the pace and power needed for each position so they had to develop their own system of play.

However, I believe that in America we do have the players who possess the pace and power to fill the roles and the demands of the French 4-3-3 system and if given some time to get used to the system they might be able to play it better than them.

# The French 4-3-3 System



## *The Keepers Role*

### **Defense**

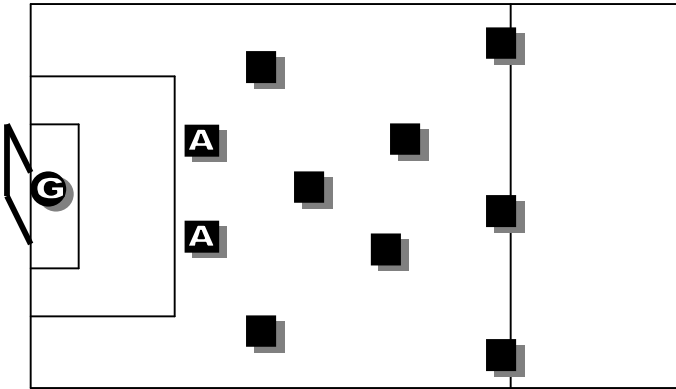
- Organize, direct and “sweep” behind the back line.
- “Safe hands” are needed to collect the crosses and make the saves that should be made.
- Stand tall and make a “big shape” when preparing to save shots.
- Make quick authoritative decisions in “goal dangerous” situations.

### **Offense**

- Make quick and accurate distributions of the ball to teammates in the back, midfield or frontline as needed.
- Distribute the ball by using over arm, side pitch or under arm throws or by using volley, half volley or place kicks.

- **Win the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Keep the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Make chances**                      **Not important**
- **Score goals**                      **Not important**

# The French 4-3-3 System



## *The Center Backs Role*

### **Defense**

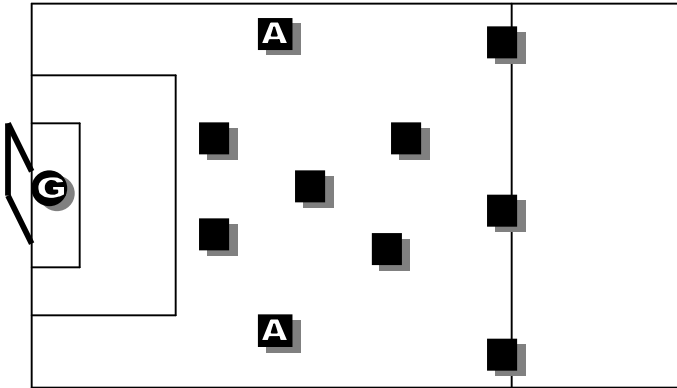
- Dominate the opposing forwards both in the air and on the ground.
- Take charge of organizing the full backs by directing their positioning.
- Work in tangent with each other so that when one center back is challenging for the ball the other is dropping back slightly to provide cover in case the challenge is lost.
- Recognize that together you represent the “off-side” line and can move this line back and forwards in unison according to the demands of the situation.

### **Offense**

- Begin the teams attacking moves with accurate passes to forwards, midfielders or full backs as the situation demands.
- Carry the ball forward out of defense only if the center back and deep lying midfielder sit in to cover, otherwise don't.
- Provide a scoring threat on attacking “dead ball” situations using your height, power and challenging experience to out-dual the opponents.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Not important</b>  |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Important</b>      |

# The French 4-3-3 System



## *The Outside Backs Role*

### **Defense**

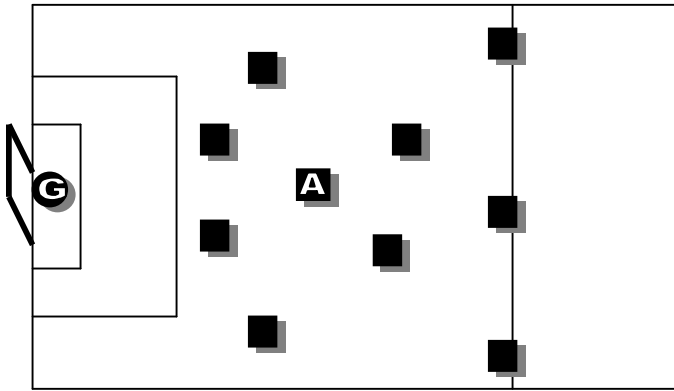
- Pick up and mark any free attacking player in your designated area of defense when the opponents attacking play is being directed down your side of the field.
- Adopt a covering position when play is directed down the opposite side of the field.

### **Offense**

- Provide quick and accurate passes to the wing player in your area of the field.
- Provide accurate passing deliveries to the front player in the central channel.
- Place forward passes either directly into the forwards or beyond them and the opponents back line forcing both the forwards and the defenders to turn and engage in a foot race to establish ball possession.
- Provide attacking support in the wide areas during the midfield build-up and be prepared to overlap into forward positions when the opportunity presents itself.
- Play and think like a “winger” once inside the attacking third of the field.

- **Win the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Keep the ball**                      **Very important**
- **Make chances**                      **Important**
- **Score goals**                      **Not important**

# The French 4-3-3 System



## *The Deep Midfielders Role*

### **Defense**

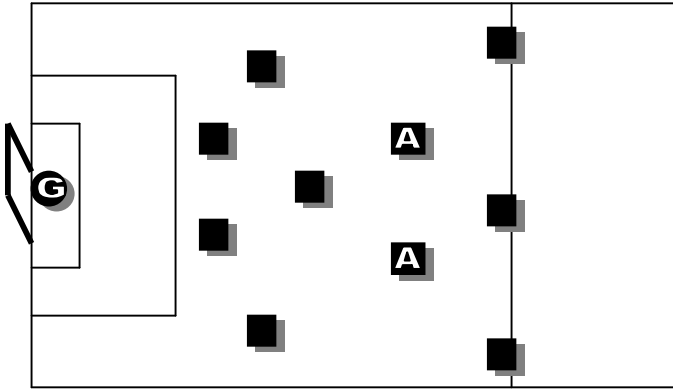
- Sweep in front of the two center backs.
- Assist center backs by picking up and marking any forward who “comes off” the front line and into the midfield area to look for the ball.
- Pick up and mark any unmarked opponent coming through the central midfield area with or without the ball.

### **Offense**

- Find space in deep midfield to be available for passes from the back line players.
- Support play in the midfield to offer an intermediate option to take part in a play switching opportunity.
- Support the attack from a deep lying position so as to latch onto any half hit clearances from the opposing defenders and by passing to an attacking teammate keep the pressure on the defending team.
- Be prepared to shoot at the opponents’ goal from thirty yards or closer.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Not important</b>  |

# The French 4-3-3 System



## *The Central Midfielders Role*

### **Defense**

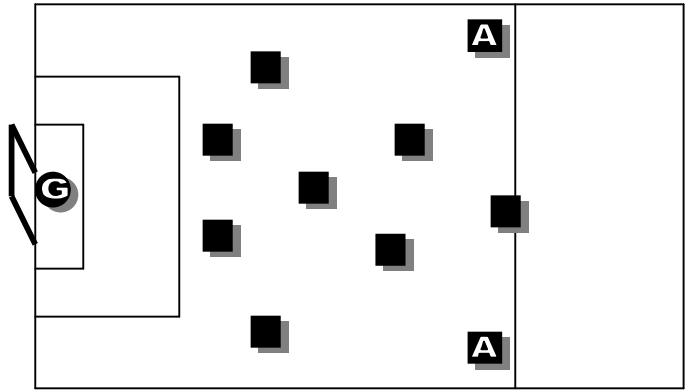
- Pick up opposing midfield players and be prepared to win all challenges in the midfield.
- Stay with your mark especially if your opponent makes a forward run.
- Take up a balancing position when on the opposite side of the opponents attacking move.

### **Offense**

- Support the movement of the front striker by taking up “pass-back” or “touch-on” supporting positions when the striker or either of the wingers receives the ball.
- Make penetrating runs down open inside forward channels to either receive a pass or free up the striker or a winger to receive the ball by attracting the attention of a marker.
- Create chances for teammates and yourself to score goals by recognizing the opportunities that central and wing attacks provide.
- Show patience by keeping control of the ball in the attacking zone rather than trying to make some low percentage attacking play.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Important</b>      |

# The French 4-3-3 System



## *The Wingers Role*

### Defense

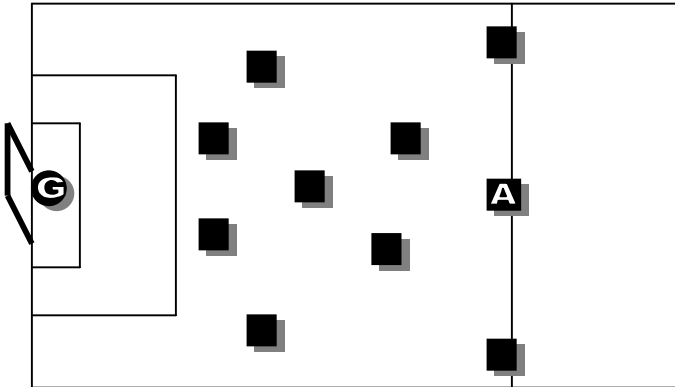
- Pick up and stay with the opposing full back.
- If the opposing full back runs forward onto the attack you must track back.
- When the attacking movement is directed down the opposite side of the field go infield a short distance but not far enough to encourage your opponents to switch the point of attack to your opposing full back.

### Offense

- Penetrate beyond the last opposing defender on your wing by running onto a through pass from a teammate or by dribbling past the defender.
- Provide a threat to the opponents' goal through technical excellence displayed in crossing, shooting and heading the ball.
- Give the attack shape and width by holding the wing position as the team advances towards the opponents' goal.
- Leave the wing area to become an extra forward threat when the team has advanced far enough down the opposite wing to deliver a cross into the opponents' penalty area.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Important</b>      |

# The French 4-3-3 System



## *The Center Forwards Role*

### Defense

- Position yourself between the two opposing center backs to discourage the keeper from throwing the ball to either of them.
- Stay in a state of defensive alert so that the opposing midfielders will think twice before passing the ball back to either of the central backs.

### Offense

- Post up and keep possession of the ball when played into feet.
- Make penetrating runs with and without the ball.
- Get into position to receive the ball while your team is defending in their defensive half or the field.
- Create goal-scoring chances.
- Score goals.
- Be mobile in the penalty area whenever an opportunity to cross the ball is imminent.
- [Remember that your movement will be difficult to mark by opponents and if the ball is crossed into the space you are attacking you will be in the best position to redirect it to goal.]
- Form a game plan around the strengths and weaknesses of yourself, your attacking teammates and your opponents that will enable you to gain an attacking advantage.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Very important</b> |



## The Husky Women 4-1-3-2 System

The title of this system of play makes reference to the University of Washington's women's team and their coach Leslie Gallimore who I worked with to find a system of play for the team.

The first system we tried to fit the girls into was the South American 4-3-3 system but although most of the roles fit the players there was a problem with the attacking midfield role that needed resolving.

To do this I went back in time to my first year as Head coach of the Seattle Sounders and pondered over the possibilities of fitting the girls into the same system that worked for the Sounders players.

The Sounders system was developed over a season in the NASL that started badly for us and got worse before it got better, in fact our record stood at 2-6 before we started to turn the corner but bit by bit we got it right.

The key to developing this system came when I recognized the need to protect my center backs from having to deal with opposing midfielders running at them with the ball.

The 4-4-2 system of play we'd been using was defensively weak because of my preference for attacking midfield players who were not as talented defensively so, to protect the center backs I played a strong defensive player in a deep midfielders role.

This player did a couple of good things for the team by first forming the point of a defensive triangle with the two center backs that forced the attackers to change the point of their attacks from the central positions to the wing positions.

The second thing he did was to free off the attacking midfielders to break forward into attacking areas knowing that a teammate was covering for them should the ball be lost.

The transformation was amazing in that we started to beat the teams that were favored to beat us and we went on a run that only ended in the NASL Final when the New York Cosmos beat us 2-1 in one of the most exciting finals ever.

Armed with this past experience I proposed to Leslie that we change the Husky system to the one I had developed for the Seattle Sounders and Leslie agreed to try it.

The girls embraced the system immediately and added their own flair to it by developing the role of the outside backs as attacking wing players as well as defending wingbacks.

This allowed the three attacking midfield players to keep their attacking runs more central and this in turn made those runs much more goal dangerous because it put them in position to either chip or cut back their crosses or to shoot.

Needless to say these attacking midfielders were high on the points list for goals and assists and the team enjoyed its best season ever winning the Pac10 Conference and being ranked "number 2" in the Nation at one point.

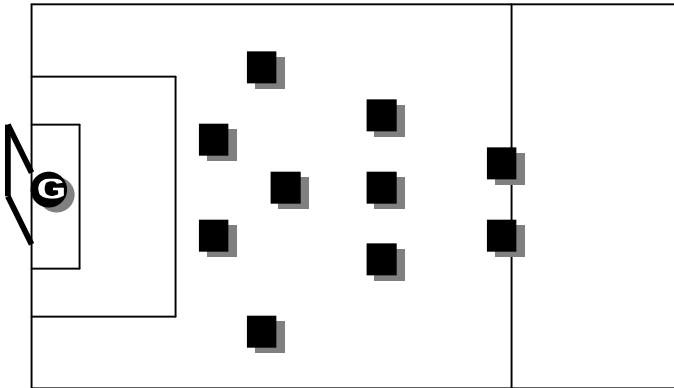
The reason I'm saying all of this is to show coaches that there is a system that will fit their players' strengths.

All the coaches have to do is to study the strengths and weaknesses of their players then find a system that will allow the players' strengths to balance out their weaknesses.

I did that with the 1977 Sounders team and Leslie Gallimore did it with the 2000 Husky women's team.

We can all do it, Good Luck.

# The 4-1-3-2 System



## *The Keepers Role*

### **Defense**

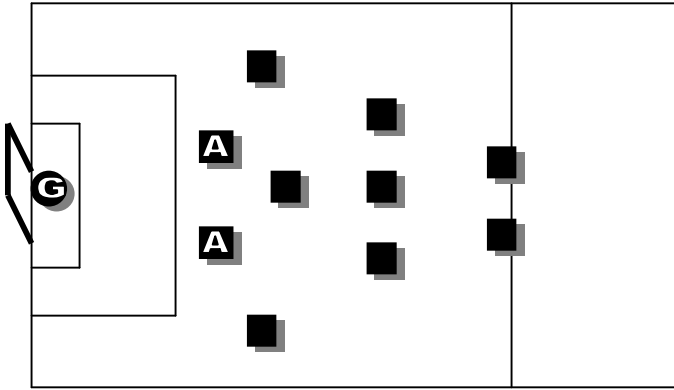
- Organize, direct and “sweep” behind the back line.
- Safe hands are needed to allow the keeper to collect the crosses and make the saves that should be made.
- Stand tall and make a “big shape” when preparing to save shots.
- Make quick authoritative decisions in “goal dangerous” situations.

### **Offense**

- Make quick, accurate distribution with both your hands and feet to teammates in the back, midfield or front line as needed.
- Utilize your 18 yard box to maximize punts and throws.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Not important</b>  |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Not important</b>  |

# The 4-1-3-2 System



## *The Center Backs Role*

### **Defense**

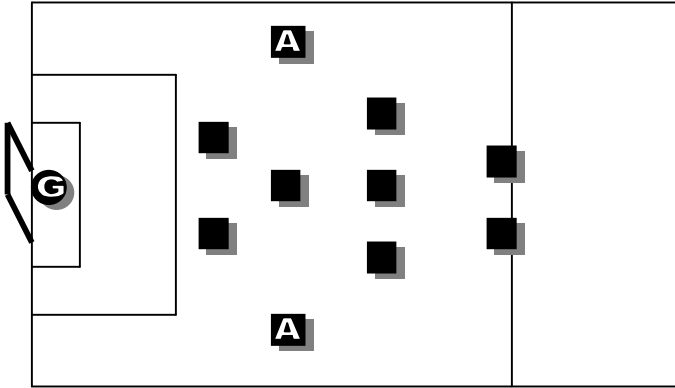
- Dominate the opponent's forwards both in the air and on the ground.
- Take charge of helping to organize the outside backs and directing their positioning.
- Work in tandem with each other so that if one is challenging for the ball the other is dropping off to provide cover.
- Recognize that you represent the "off-side" line and must move the line up and back in unison as necessary.

### **Offense**

- Start attacking moves by passing directly to forwards, midfielders or outside backs as needed.
- Carry the ball forward only if the defensive midfield player is in position to cover the space you have vacated.
- Be a goal threat on attacking restarts.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Not important</b>  |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Important</b>      |

# The 4-1-3-2 System



## *The Outside Backs Role*

### **Defense**

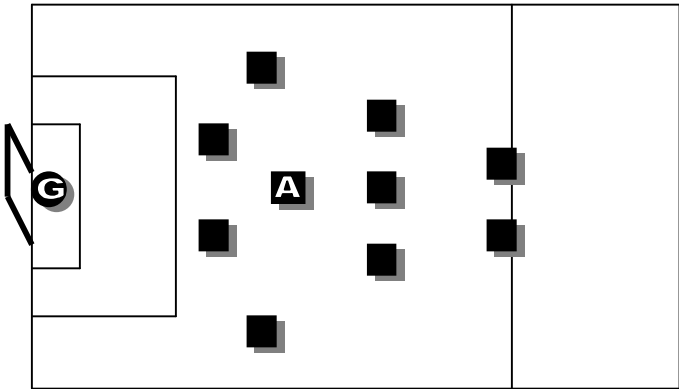
- Pick up and mark your opponent when play is on your side of the field.
- Provide cover and balance when the play is on the opposite side of the field before the opponents generate the attack.
- Step up to opposing wing players.
- Dominate in the air.

### **Offense**

- Provide accurate service to the front players both in the wide channel [ball dropped in over opposing defenders] and central channel [target passes driven to central players].
- Provide support in wide areas during the midfield build-up and overlap into forward positions when possible.
- Play like a winger once you're in the attacking third.
- Serve the ball accurately into the box.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Not important</b>  |

# The 4-1-3-2 System



## *The Defensive Midfield Player's Role*

### **Defense**

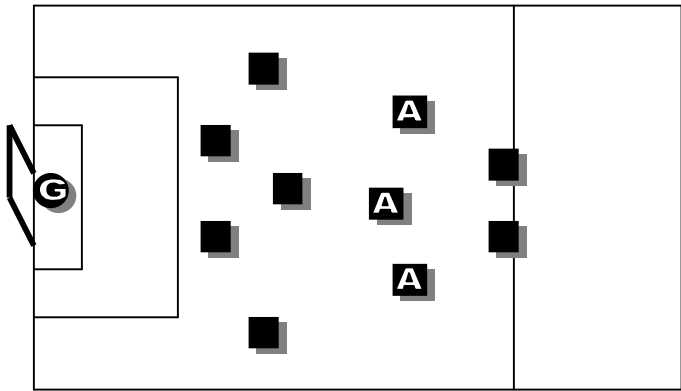
- Sweep in front of the two center backs.
- Challenge any unmarked player coming through with or without the ball.
- Assist the center backs by picking up forwards who “come off” the frontline into the midfield area looking for the ball.
- Be a tough tackler and ball winner.

### **Offense**

- Find space in the midfield to be available for passes from the back line players.
- Support play in the midfield so as to offer the option to “switch play” if needed.
- Play accurate long balls from one wide player to the opposite wide player in a limited amount of touches.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Not important</b>  |

# The 4-1-3-2 System



## *The Attacking Midfield Players Role*

### Defense

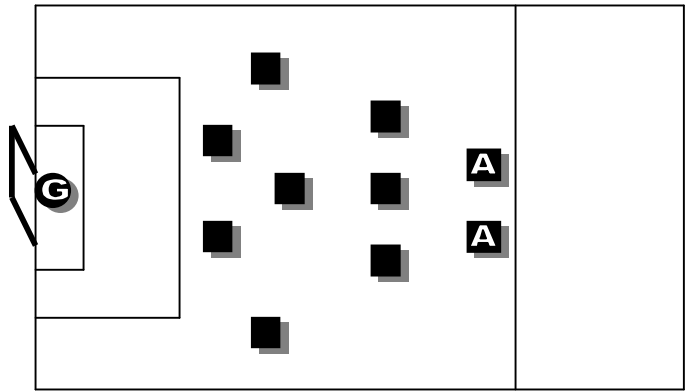
- Pick up opponents midfield players and win challenges in the midfield.
- Go wide to defend opponents outside backs.
- Assist with defensive pressure and cover as needed in central and wide midfield.

### Offense

- Provide accurate service to the front players or others who are making forward runs.
- Support the forward receiving the ball and make penetrating runs beyond the forwards when possible.
- Make penetrating runs with the ball if it is a good option and be a threat on goal.
- Serve the ball into the box from wider areas.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Important</b>      |

# The 4-1-3-2 System



## *The Center Forwards Role*

### Defense

- Put defensive pressure on the opponent's center backs and stay with your mark.
- Track center backs that make forward runs or penetrate on the dribble.

### Offense

- Hold possession of the ball if played to feet.
- Create goal-scoring chances for teammates.
- Score goals.
- Make penetrating runs with and without the ball.
- Make lateral runs in front of the defense.
- Get into position to receive the ball while our team is defending in our own half.

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| • <b>Win the ball</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Keep the ball</b> | <b>Very important</b> |
| • <b>Make chances</b>  | <b>Important</b>      |
| • <b>Score goals</b>   | <b>Very important</b> |